

Personal Protective Equipment Survey, August 2021

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Demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) among businesses stayed the same in August. Aside from a decrease in demand for PPE from February to May 2021, demand for PPE has been stable since December 2020. However, in August, more businesses had concerns about shortages of essential PPE, especially businesses in educational services.

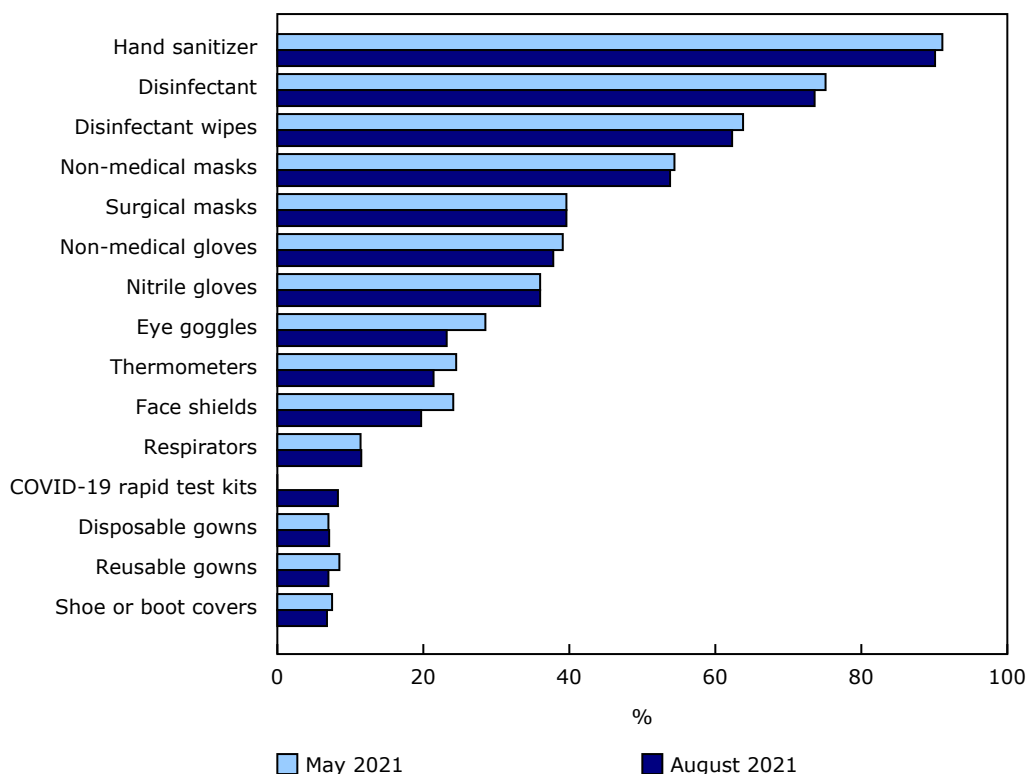
Businesses' needs for personal protective equipment unchanged in August 2021

In August 2021, just over three-fifths (60.5%) of businesses reported that they needed or expected to need PPE to operate in accordance with COVID-19-related public health guidelines, unchanged from May.

Businesses in educational services (91.7%) and in accommodation and food services (87.0%) had the highest demand for PPE. Conversely, businesses in professional, scientific and technical services (39.2%) and in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (34.9%) had the lowest demand.

The distribution of PPE items most demanded by businesses has remained relatively unchanged from May 2021. PPE used when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces as well as gloves and face PPE items continued to be most demanded by businesses.

Chart 1
Personal protective equipment products demanded by businesses



... not applicable

Note(s): Each bar provides the proportion of personal protective equipment most in demand by businesses.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, Personal Protective Equipment Survey (5332).

More businesses concerned about shortages of personal protective equipment

Almost one-quarter (23.1%) of the businesses that need at least one type of PPE to operate in accordance with public health guidelines had concerns about PPE shortages within the next three months, up 3.5 percentage points from May. This was the only increase since the first iteration of this survey in July 2020.

In August 2021, businesses in educational services (24.2%) were the most likely to expect a shortage of required PPE.

Most businesses are not adopting or using COVID-19 rapid tests

More than four-fifths (81.7%) of businesses that had employees working on-site in August did not use COVID-19 rapid tests to check those employees for COVID-19 infection. Just over two-thirds (68.5%) of businesses did not plan on implementing COVID-19 rapid tests in the three months after August. The most commonly cited reasons for not using COVID-19 rapid tests were a "low perceived risk" (54.8%) or "not needed" (37.1%).

Of the 4.5% of businesses that did use COVID-19 rapid testing, just over 7 out of 10 (71.0%) of their employees were tested using COVID-19 rapid tests on average.

Share of businesses involved in the manufacturing or distribution of personal protective equipment increases slightly

Just over 1 in 20 (5.4%) businesses in the manufacturing, retail trade and wholesale trade sectors were involved in the manufacturing or distribution of personal protective equipment in August. This represents a 0.8 percentage point increase from the 4.6% reported in May 2021.

Note to readers

The 15 types of personal protective equipment (PPE) covered by the survey are COVID-19 rapid test kits, disinfectant, disinfectant wipes, disposable gowns, eye goggles, face shields, hand sanitizer, nitrile gloves, non-medical gloves, non-medical masks, respirators, reusable gowns, shoe or boot covers, surgical masks, and thermometers.

This release is based on data from the August 2021 Personal Protective Equipment Survey. This voluntary survey collects information on private sector businesses' supply, demand and inventories of PPE. Results from the August survey were based on responses from 5,509 businesses operating in Canada.

Available tables: [13-10-0786-01](#) and [13-10-0787-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: [survey number 5332](#).

The new study "[Trends in businesses' needs for personal protective equipment since May 2021](#)" is now available as part of the series *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)). Using data from the August Personal Protective Equipment Survey, this study examines the evolution of private sector businesses' demand for personal protective equipment since May 2021 and the concerns about lack of supply.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).